Annual Teacher Quality Report

Utah State Office of Education

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Focus on Quality Instruction

The creation and sustainability of a strong Utah economy depends largely on the state's ability to educate and employ citizens at a level that is competitive nationally and internationally. Quality instruction is the primary influence on student achievement and therefore must be given considerable attention through policy and practice. The Utah State Board of Education supports a comprehensive human capital approach that strategically invests in teachers and principals in order to improve student outcomes. Our approach to improving instructional quality focuses on (1) selectively recruiting prospective teachers and principals to the profession; (2) improving preparation of prospective teachers and principals; (3) and working to retain the most effective teachers and principals.

Teacher Recruitment Initiatives

The Utah Educator Employment Application (powered by Teachers.Teachers.com) is now being used by 40 of our 41 districts and 57 charter schools. This online application allows for teachers from across the country as well as within our own state to fill out one application for potential employment in a variety of settings. Districts/charters are able to post vacancies and conduct candidate searches throughout the year. Using this system has increased outreach to potential teaching candidates. From April 1, 2008 to March 31, 2009 the total number of licensed candidates interested in Utah education positions increased from 17,486 to 23,548 (35%).

Returning Educator Initiative - The *Returning Educator Initiative* is a licensing route for educators who previously held an active Utah teaching license but left teaching for a period of time. This licensure process allows teachers to receive a license based on a professional development plan that is targeted to their individual needs and jointly created between the educator and their supervisor. During the 2008-2009 school year 118 educators came back to the classroom via the Returning Educator route and 102 are assigned to their teaching position again this year. An additional 20 applications have been received for the 2010 school year.

Paraeducator to Teacher Scholarship - Paraeducator to Teacher Scholarships provide funds to paraeducators seeking to become licensed educators. Paraeducators who deliver instruction under the direct supervision of a teacher and work in the areas of special education, Title I or ESL are eligible to apply. The 2008 legislature appropriated \$25,000 which provided 17 scholarships of \$1,470 selected from 180 applicants. Of the 17 recipients, all but one completed two semesters of coursework. Eight of those applicants are continuing on with their studies this year and the remaining funding was awarded to seven new applicants.

2008 – 2009 Freshman Class of Teachers

Entry data:

- 3,249 regular classroom teachers were hired by districts/charters (81% female, 19% male)
- 85% of the teachers hired had no previous teaching assignment
- 830 teachers who were previously assigned transferred to another district or charter
- 37% of new hires were assigned to teach special education, science or math
- 48% of new hires were assigned to teach elementary grades, including K
- 5% of teachers hired indicated ethnicity other than Caucasian (2.2% Hispanic) compared to 3.3% of the educators who are currently teaching

Exit survey data: (sample size 280)

(Count of teachers not assigned in 2009 who were previously assigned in 2008 not available until early November).

- 52% over age of 50
- 42% had 5 years or fewer experience, 31% had over 25 years of experience
- Retirement, relocation and staying home with family continue to be cited as the main reasons for exiting Utah teaching assignment
- 18% were terminated by school or district

Out of state applicants came primarily from the west but are representative of states across the country. From Jan – Dec. of 2008 566 applications for out of state candidates were processed and 80% were employed in Utah public schools.

Alternative Routes to Licensure (ARL) program continues to grow as indicated on the following chart:

Four year comparison with year representing calendar year of January – December

	2005	2006	2007	2008
Applications processed	249	527	663	989
Applicants hired by LEAs	94	229	313	452
Participants completing ARL program	85	108	160	151

Additional technical and professional staff has helped USOE expedite the application process and provide better support for ARL candidates working towards licensure. ARL candidates continue to bring a variety of content expertise to the classroom but also continue to need additional support in the pedagogy of teaching. Our ARL candidates now have more options for earning their license which include the following:

- Additional content areas added to our ABCTE competency offerings
- Districts and universities providing support to ARL candidates (i.e., Dixie State College coop with Washington County Schools, USU ATP special education preparation program).
- Districts providing coursework and additional mentoring
- Online coursework in development for Spring 2010

International Guest Teacher Program allows Utah students to learn language and culture in Mandarin Chinese, French and Spanish from native speakers. Utah hosts teachers from China, Taiwan, Spain, Mexico and France via memos of understanding with these respective Ministries of Education. This year Utah schools are working with 30 International Guest Teachers including 19 from China. The majority of these teachers work in schools with dual immersion language and AP foreign language programs.

Retaining and Rewarding the Best Teachers

Research at the national (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Wilson, Floden & Ferrini-Mundy, 2001) and state levels (Sanders, 1996) confirms that there is a significant relationship between teacher quality and student achievement, and that interventions in both teacher education and teacher professional development successfully affect student learning. The focus is often placed on teacher preparation and yet education systems are much stronger when emphasis and resources are applied to retention (Ingersoll, 2008).

Current Educator Quality Projects

- Utah's participation in a **multi-state consortium** to develop and pilot a **teacher continuum** will provide funding and leverage to redesign university teacher preparation and provide multiple pathways for teachers to advance their career. This may include developing a teacher leader certification and mentor certification. The project is currently in the development phase.
- **Utah Professional Teaching Standards** currently being viewed by many other states as a model to follow. USOE personnel and LEA leaders reviewing standards to ensure focus on high quality instruction. Video examples of quality instruction will be attached to standards online to allow educators to see standards in practice.
- Utah Teacher Preparation Programs are currently developed and monitored as connected to the NCATE or TEAC process. Board rule needs to be updated to ensure certain standards are met and provisions are available for program review and monitoring. USOE staff is currently working with Utah Deans of Education and Utah Board of Regents to develop appropriate guidelines.
- Educator Evaluation statute was revised in 2009 General Session (HB264) to update language, align practices with research based practices and place emphasis on quality instruction. Data is currently being gathered and analyzed to assess LEA alignment with state statute and provide information to aide in developing new Board Rule.
- **Differentiated Pay Pilot** is currently in process to recognize excellence and promote quality instruction in all classrooms. Pilot schools will work this year to develop programs aligned with research and program goals. Expansion of program will be highly dependent on funding.